

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

Written by Bill Martin Jr and illustrated by Eric Carle

Simple singsong rhymes and bright tissue-paper animals grab the attention of the audience in Eric Carle's first book, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* Bill Martin Jr.'s verses ask each animal to describe what it sees. The fantastic colors of some of the creatures (a purple cat, a blue horse) are unexpected delights that young children have loved for generations since the book's publication in 1967. Readers who are familiar with Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* will recognize his bold, clear designs and will enjoy the drawings from the book that began Carle's celebrated career.

Lottie's New Beach Towel

Written and illustrated by Petra Mathers

An adventure-filled book about how one item can save the day, *Lottie's New Beach Towel*, the first book written and illustrated by Petra Mathers, is a humorous tale of a fateful summer day at the beach. When Lottie, a friendly chicken, receives a polka-dot towel in the mail from a beloved aunt, she has no idea how much it will come in handy. The towel is perfect for small solutions—it keeps Lottie dry and protects her from scorching sand—but it also allows for some fortunate rescues. A whimsical read, Mathers's book is illustrated simply, emphasizing life's small pleasures.

Beautiful Blackbird

Written and illustrated by Ashley Bryan

A bright, rhythmic adaptation of a Zambian folktale, *Beautiful Blackbird* is an energetic story of acceptance of one's inner beauty and a mythic explanation of African bird markings and coloration. Beautiful Blackbird, the only one in the forest who is all black, is envied by his fellow rainbow-colored birds for his shiny dark feathers. The story is a celebration of the individual and varied beauty. Bryan's illustrations are colorful Matisse-like cutouts and add a contemporary twist to a traditional tale.

The Mountain That Loved a Bird

Written by Alice McLerran and illustrated by Eric Carle

A gentle story geared toward kindergarten-age children, *The Mountain That Loved a Bird* tells of a lonely mountain that meets a small bird. Desperate for a friend, the mountain begs the bird, named Joy, to stay and live on the mountainside. Though she cannot stay—there is no food and no place to build her nest—Joy promises that she and her descendants will return to visit the mountain each spring. This is a heartwarming narrative about hope, faith, and friendship. Eric Carle's illustrations match the mood of the tale, from gray sadness to exuberant reds and blues.

Beat the Story-Drum, Pum-Pum

Written and illustrated by Ashley Bryan

Like *Beautiful Blackbird*, *Beat the Story-Drum, Pum-Pum* is a collection of African folktales for children, ranging from moralistic stories about family life to explanations of why two wild animals are enemies. Bryan's graceful stories, filled with rhymes and musical sounds, are meant to be read to the beat of an African drum, which links the reading of a simple fable to the oral storytelling of Africa. The illustrations—done mostly in black-and-white with an occasional addition of red and yellow—enliven the tales with their vibrant and energetic outlines.

Into the Woods: John James Audubon Lives His Dream

Written by Robert Burleigh and illustrated by Wendell Minor

An elegant picture-book biography of one of America's pioneering naturalists, *Into the Woods*, as the title suggests, is a poetic celebration of following one's dreams. "‘Be a store owner,’ his father said," author Robert Burleigh writes, "But John went to the woods instead." Filled with realistic, painted-from-nature illustrations by Wendell Minor, *Into the Woods* is an introduction to wildlife conservation and history for grade-school-age children. It celebrates the beauty of Audubon's illustrations, lovingly mirrored by Minor's own designs.

The Foolish Tortoise

Written by Richard Buckley and illustrated by Eric Carle

A morality tale in the tradition of Aesop's fables, *The Foolish Tortoise* describes the consequences of risky ventures and the value of one's comfort zone. A tortoise, tired of moving so slowly, decides to escape his shell with the confidence that the lost weight will bring speedy changes. However, the tortoise is brought face-to-face with real dangers, including predators, which send him scurrying back to his shell's protection. Carle's illustrations add depth and highlight true emotion in the story, with designs tender enough to illustrate the thin lines between comfort and boredom, excitement and danger.

The Mixed-Up Chameleon

Written and illustrated by Eric Carle

What would happen if a chameleon could change not only colors, but also shapes and sizes, instantly? After a trip to a zoo, a chameleon, bored with his basic color transformations, wills himself to take on the characteristics of other animals he sees, becoming tall like a giraffe or handsome like a preening flamingo. The result is not only hilarious but completely impractical, inspiring the chameleon to return to his natural form. A funny story with a timeless message, *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* teaches self-esteem and acceptance, reminding readers that they are perfect just the way they are.

My Working Mom

Written by Peter Glassman and illustrated by Tedd Arnold

Like many working parents, the mom in this story tosses together weird dinners, rushes off to meetings, and struggles to juggle work and family. The difference is that this mom is a witch! Tedd Arnold said he loved collaborating on this book because “in its purest form, a picture book is one where the words by themselves do not tell the whole story. The story happens only when the pictures are combined with the words.” The deadpan text takes flight through Arnold’s hilarious illustrations as the pages erupt with toads and bats, bubbling cauldrons, and a riot of magical solutions.

The Random House Book of Poetry for Children

Illustrated by Arnold Lobel

The Random House Book of Poetry for Children, published in 1983, became an instant classic—not only for the ambitious collection of 500 poems selected by esteemed poet and anthologist Jack Prelutsky, but also for the abundant illustrations created by Caldecott award–winning illustrator Arnold Lobel. His whimsical pen-and-ink characters cavort on the page among the lines of some of the world’s greatest poets, from Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, and Lewis Carroll to Langston Hughes, Nikki Giovanni, and Shel Silverstein.

The Random House Book of Mother Goose

Illustrated by Arnold Lobel

How do you breathe new life into Mother Goose tales, which have been told and retold for at least two centuries? When the editors at Random House Books for Young Readers began their ambitious 176-page collection, they put their project into the more-than-capable hands of Caldecott award–winning illustrator Arnold Lobel, who had previously illustrated *The Random House Book of Poetry*. His detailed pen-and-ink interpretations for *The Random House Book of Mother Goose* bring fresh humor to old classics. *School Library Journal* declared, “Lobel himself soars with Mother Goose, and she with him. A tour de force.”

Fables

Written and illustrated by Arnold Lobel

Arnold Lobel was originally hired to illustrate a new edition of Aesop's fables, but he struggled so much with their moralistic tone, he resigned from the project and returned the advance. But the concept of the fable as a literary device got so under his skin, he decided to write and illustrate his own collection. *Fables* won the 1981 Caldecott Medal for best illustrated picture book of the year and was also on many industry "best" lists, including the American Language Association Notable Children's Books and The New York Times Outstanding Children's Books of 1980.

Gregory Griggs and Other Nursery Rhyme People

Illustrated by Arnold Lobel

“Gregory Griggs, Gregory Griggs had forty-seven different wigs...” Who says Little Miss Muffet and Little Jack Horner should get all the attention from paparazzi in the world of nursery-rhyme entertainment? In this collection of thirty-three nursery rhymes, Arnold Lobel uses his witty illustration style to spotlight some of the lesser-known nursery-rhyme folk—just as much fun, but without a superstar in sight.

The Ice-Cream Cone Coot and Other Rare Birds

Written and illustrated by Arnold Lobel

Have you ever seen an Ice-Cream Cone Coot? A Waterglass Goose? A Glove Dove or a Milkbottle Midge? Children and grown-ups alike are captivated by this charming “guide” to rare made-up birds. Arnold Lobel demonstrates his gift for marrying humorous writing and illustration with such rhymes as this: “The dirtiest bird is the Garbage Canary / He lives in conditions quite unsanitary.”

Little Turtle's Big Adventure

Written by David Harrison and illustrated by J. P. Miller

A pond is destroyed to make way for a new highway. What happens to all the wild-life that lives there? *Little Turtle's Big Adventure* is a simple environmental tale that follows the journey of one little turtle as he explores new environments and tries to find a new home. Harrison's story and J. P. Miller's detailed illustrations work well together to explain environmental issues on a level that children can understand.

Fish is Fish

By Leo Lionni

A minnow and a tadpole are inseparable friends. They look alike, so they must be alike—right? But one day the tadpole wakes up and discovers he has grown two legs! He’s a frog! But the fish refuses to accept that his friend is anything but a fish. They argue until the tadpole shouts, “Frogs are frogs and fish is fish and that’s that!” When the frog returns from land with tales that fill the fish’s imagination with images of fantastic creatures—beautifully illustrated by Lionni’s rainbow-colored art—the fish decides to leap onto the bank to see for himself.

Tillie and the Wall

Written and illustrated by Leo Lionni

“The wall had been there ever since the mice could remember,” begins this adventurous tale. “They never paid attention to it. They never even asked themselves what was on the other side.” But one little mouse named Tillie is not content. Her imagination runs rampant with visions of what might lie beyond. One day, in a courageous leap of faith, she tunnels under the wall to discover what lies on the other side—and becomes the hero of a tale about breaking down walls between people.

The Reason For The Pelican

Written by John Ciardi and Illustrated by Madeleine Gekiere

Why is a pelican's beak so big? Instead of answering this question outright, the humor and joy of wondering "why" is embraced. Through twenty-three poems, readers of all ages are given absurd and ridiculous situations that will make them laugh. Lightness and a playful attitude are woven into each rhyme using a child's perspective. Reason is traded for imagination resulting in an enchanting and charming new look at the world.

Zoologische Ergebnisse Einer Reise in Niederlandisch Ost-indien

Written by Max Webber and Illustrated by Theodorus van Hoytema

Hoytema was selected to illustrate birds for a four-volume account of a Zoological expedition to the Dutch East Indies. It was undertaken by the University of Amsterdam from the years 1888-1889, and gave a comprehensive view of the area's wildlife. Complete copies of this work can be found in the libraries of The American Museum of Natural History in New York and The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.